



State of Rhode Island

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH M. McNAMARA, *District 19*
Chairman, Committee on Education

October 12, 2022

Mr. Aaron Gilbert
EPA, RCRA Facilities Manager
Gilbert.aron@epa.gov

SUBJECT: Ciba-Geigy Corrective Action Plan

Dear Mr. Gilbert:

The recent increase in the frequency of flooding of the Pawtuxet River Watershed in Warwick and Cranston has raised several concerns in the abutting residential communities. A specific area of concern is the former site of the Ciba-Geigy Chemical Company located at 180 Mill Street in Cranston. The chemical company operated on the site operated from 1954 to 1986. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – Region 1 is currently monitoring a RCRA Corrective Action Plan at the site.

During the 2010 flooding of the Pawtuxet River, adjacent neighborhoods in both Warwick and Cranston were flooded. When the river receded, varying depths of sediment were left on neighborhood properties. Home and business owners were left on their own to remove this sediment, which in many cases had what residents described as “petro chemical” odors which were also described as a “toxic chemical smells”. The Rhode Island Department of Health recommended that individuals should wear N95 masks when removing or shoveling this substance. I purchased a case and handed them out to residents of the effected neighborhoods.



The 2010 flood was described as a “once in 100 years flood”. Last month 15 inches of rain fell in a few hours, flooding and closing Interstate 95 in Providence. If this storm had occurred 2 miles South-West of Providence, it would have led to a major flooding event as defined by the National Oceanic and Atmosphere Administration. My concern is that the PCB’s and other toxic chemicals that are currently sequestered and capped will permeate the sand and wells located at this site and migrate into the river and its sediment. Based on the toxic legacy left by Ciba-Geigy, I strongly believe that the increased flooding due to climate change will have a contributing effect on the threat that this site poses to human health and the environment.

I would like to respectfully request that the EPA in consultation with eh RI DEM develop a plan that addresses the following issues:

1. Public notification of the results of any testing that is done on the site, including the die testing to determine is PCB’s are leaching into wells and the river.

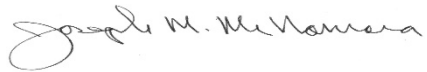


2. Develop a community notification plan if ground water containments are leaked into the Pawtuxet River.

-  3. Develop a plan to address the remediation of contamination sediment on residential and business properties that minimizes the risk to human health and the environment.
-  4. Develop plans that use weather models that factor in projected increases in flooding events based upon updated climate data.

Please feel free to contact me on my cell, (401) 742-5297 if you have any questions. Thank you in advance for your kind consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Joseph M. McNamara
Chairman, House Committee on Education
Representative District 19-Cranston/Warwick
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JMM/lac

Attachment: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – Region 1
RCRA Corrective Action Plan
Former Ciba-Geigy Facility, May 25, 2016

cc: Terrence Gray, Director DEM

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